DETROIT NATIVE SUN

Telford Telescope: My 2012 athletic edict

By Dr. John Telford
SUN COLUMNIST

Ten years ago while serving pro bono as the Superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools, I wrote a 'Telford's Telescope' column in this paper titled 'Superintendent sets new athletic standard.'

It's timely to revisit that column: having been an international athlete and then coach of city and state track champions in several schools in the Detroit Public School Athletic League (see 1966 photo of me with some of my Pershing champions), it was fitting that one of my initial edicts in 2012 as superintendent was to establish a GPA (grade-point average) requirement still extant 10 years later that has been fairer to our athletes and is equivalent to that of others who compete for Michigan high schools. Prior to my establishing this reasonable standard, a deputy superintendent in the previous Burnley administration that was put in place following the unwarranted 1999 state takeover of DPS had set the standard higher than anywhere else in the state in a district where our athletes' average GPA due to Detroit's myriad social problems was near the state's lowest. Thus, not only was this standard unfair to our athletes, it was patently illogical, since one of the overweening goals of the late Dr. Kenneth Burnley--himself a record-breaking DPS and U-M sprinter--was to keep them from dropping out of school.

When I taught and coached in DPS in the 1960s and again in 1999, the opportunity to participate in athletics then as now was the only thing preventing many from dropping out. Therefore, I always required my scholastically-at-risk athletes to show me their report cards at every card-marking--and those who weren't performing satisfactorily had to give me written reports from their teachers every week. This facilitated keeping them academically eligible for athletic competition, enabled several to win city and state titles, and kept all of them out of scholastic, behavioral, and street trouble.

Some of my fastest athletes attended college on athletic scholarships, but my basic goal was to keep them all in school and ensure that they graduated. Now that a domed fieldhouse will be built at Chandler Park, I ask everyone to urge Mayor Duggan, Council President Mary Sheffleid, and District 4 Councilwoman Latisha Johnson to ensure that a long-needed 200-meter track for age-group, high school, and post-high-school competition--with grand stands for spectators--will be in the fieldhouse.

John Telford was a record-breaking DPS athlete and NCAA All-America sprinter at WSU in the 1950s. Tune him in Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and Mondays at 6:30 p.m. on WCHB AM1340--and Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. on WJZZ Internet TV. Contact him at DrJohnTelfordEdD@aol.com or (313) 460-8272.

Seven steps to take after receiving college financial aid award letters

(StatePoint) Perhaps even more nerve-wracking than waiting for your child's college acceptance letters is learning whether they've been awarded financial aid. This is the piece of the puzzle that tells you how much it will really cost, and ultimately, whether a particular school is within your budget.

"Decoding award letters and comparing their terms can be a challenge," says Angela Colatriano, chief marketing officer of College Ave Student Loans. "Just be patient and take the time to understand each offer."

In a recent College Ave Student Loans parent survey conducted by Barnes & Noble College Insights, 42% of parents who received an aid offer letter found aspects of it confusing, and 68% agreed that terms and layout of these letters varied from school to school.

To make better sense of financial aid award letters, follow these steps:

1. Look for free money: The award letter will list whether your student is eligible for scholarships and grants (sometimes called Merit or Gift Aid). This is money you typically don't need to pay back. Some merit aid is tied to how your child performed in high school.
2. Look for Federal Work-Study: Your child might be eligible for Federal Work-Study jobs. While jobs aren't guaranteed, they can be a good opportunity to help cover educational expenses.
3. Spot the loans: Schools will list any federal loans your child is eligible to receive. Helpful hint: They may be grouped with scholarship and grants. You should also take note of whether a Federal loan is subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are more desirable, as they don't accrue interest while your student is still enrolled.
4. Calculate your net cost: To get an apples-to-apples look at the offers, determine the net direct cost of each particular school. This is calculated by subtracting offered scholarships and grants from the cost of attendance (total cost of tuition, room, board, textbooks and fees). If applicable, you can subtract work-study aid too.
5. Play the field: Some parents have found success in appealing the financial aid package offered, especially if their financial circumstances have changed. Contact your top schools of interest and share the awards your student has been offered. Some schools will match other schools' award packages or will offer additional funds. Ask about additional scholarships or grants that might be available.
6. Consider other factors: Check if awards being offered are for all four years and understand what your child will need to do to continue being eligible for them, year-to-year. You should also factor in expected increases in tuition, room, and board.
7. Fill the gaps: If after doing the math, you find you have a financial gap to cover, you may also consider a private student loan or parent loan. Look for a lender with great rates, flexible repayment terms, and the opportunity to customize the loan to fit your family's budget. For example, College Ave Student Loans offers tools and resources to help you along your financial road to college, along with a pre-qualification tool that offers answers without affecting your credit score. To learn more, visit CollegeAve.com.

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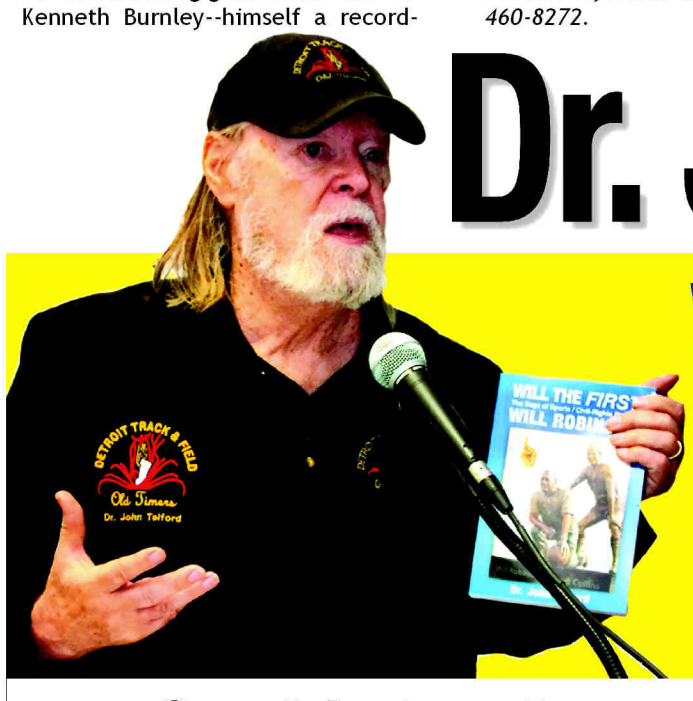

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